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REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8-17 and 36-39 are pending in this application. The specification is objected to. The claims are subject to election of species.

The Examiner states on page 4 of the Office Communication that the specification is objected to because it contains an incorrect United States Patent Number at page 3, line 5. However, patent number 5,558,922 which is discussed at that location of the specification appears to be correct and is the patent that the Applicants wish to contrast to their present invention. Patent 5,558,922 issued on September 24, 1996, to Gupta, et al. and is titled "Thick Thermal Barrier Coating Having Grooves for Enhanced Strain Tolerance." Accordingly, the applicants do not understand the objection to the specification. Additional clarification is respectfully requested, or alternatively, the objection should be withdrawn if it is in error.

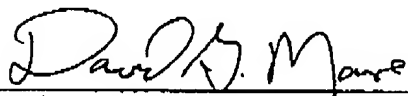
The Applicants have amended the claims herein to eliminate some of the distinctions between claims that caused the Examiner to impose the requirement for an election of species. The Applicants provisionally elect the species identified by the Examiner as Species I, including the as-amended claims 1-6, 8-11, 13-17 and 36-39. The Applicants respectfully traverse the requirement for election of a species as follows.

As described in the various sub-sections of MPEP 808, the Examiner is under a burden to establish reasons for insisting upon restriction. The Examiner's statement the "each group of claims requires specific features not found in the other species" is inadequate to establish such a need. In the present application, the claims identified under both Species I and Species IV have a clear relationship related to the use of a plurality of passes of laser energy necessary to form the gap/groove. (claims 38 and 39 include the limitation of a "plurality of passes of laser energy" and claim 1 and its dependent claims include the limitation of "a first pass of laser energy...and...a second pass of laser energy") This relationship precludes the need for restriction unless otherwise discussed and overcome by reasons advanced by the Examiner, as required by MPEP 808.01(a). The Applicant also notes that claims 13-15 of Species II

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depend from claim 1 of Species I, and that the claims of Species III now also depend from claim 1 of Species I, thereby establishing a relationship and negating the need for restriction. As to claim 12 of Species II, a requirement for restriction between Species I and II would be permissible only if there would be a serious burden on the Examiner if restriction is not required. Since there have been three previous substantive examinations of the claims of the present application, including the examination of claim limitations that are the same as or are substantively the same as those currently pending, the examination of all of the pending claims would not present a serious burden on the Examiner. Accordingly, the requirement for election of a single species should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,



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